

Communing with Christ: The Passover Fulfilled

Luke 22:1-23

Halifax: 1 February 2004

Introduction:

Almost 2000 years ago, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

- Twelve men were present when He gave them bread and said,
 - "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
 - And when He gave them wine and said,
 - "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for you."
- He told them He was going away,
 - and He commanded them to eat the bread and to drink the wine in remembrance of Him after He was gone.

Since that night with those twelve men,

- hundreds of millions of people have been to this table...
 - They have eaten the bread and drunk the wine that Jesus commanded.

But sadly, many have come to this Supper without a clear understanding of what the Supper is all about.

- They go through the motions—they eat and they drink—but they do not eat and drink with faith.
- And there are others who truly do know Christ, but who obtain very little benefit from communion because they come to this table with little understanding.

Last month I began a first-Sunday-of-the-month series on communion in order to help you understand what we do when we come to the Lord's Table.

- Our Lord Jesus wants you to understand...
- As I showed you last month,
 - He fervently desires that all His people come to this table and receive a blessing from Him.

Perhaps you have been coming to the Lord's Supper for a long time,

- but feel you really don't understand what it is all about!
 - If that is your case, then this series is for you...
- And I am sure that those of you who have an understanding want to know more.
 - The Lord's Supper is the kind of thing that the more you learn, the more you want to learn.

Today, I want to focus in particular on some of the things we can learn about the Lord's Supper from the Passover.

- In verse 15-16, Jesus states that the Passover is going to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
 - Luke 22:15-16: Then He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."
- Jesus is making it known that this is the last time that He is going to eat the Passover with His disciples before He suffers.
 - His suffering is very near at hand...
 - But there is an implication here as well...
 - The implication here is that His suffering itself will have something to do with fulfilling the Passover!
- And I can say to you with all confidence that Jesus death and suffering does indeed fulfil the Passover because the apostle Paul tells us that this is so...
 - In 1 Corinthians 5:7, He declares:
 - "For indeed Christ, **our Passover**, was sacrificed for us."
 - Sometimes the term "Passover" was used to refer to the lamb that was sacrificed and then eaten at Passover...
 - Here, Paul shows that Jesus is that lamb—
 - He is "**our Passover**..."
 - He is, the Passover sacrifice for the New Testament Church!
- This is the language of fulfilment!
 - Jesus completes all that was anticipated by the Old Testament Passover...
 - The Passover is no longer celebrated in the Church with a lamb because "our Passover" is Jesus Christ.
 - In this very meeting with His disciples, Jesus was replacing the Passover with the Lord's Supper.
- Now since Jesus is our Passover,
 - It will obviously help you to understand quite a lot about Him to look at the Passover.
 - You will understand more about Him by understanding more about the Passover.

I. Now I want you to put yourself back in the time when the Passover was first instituted.

- A. There you are in Egypt, serving under a tyrant—under Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.
1. As an Israelite, you know about how your fathers came to Egypt 430 years ago because of a famine.
 - You know about father Abraham and how God had appeared to him and promised to be God to him and to his descendants.
 - And how He told Abraham that his descendants would live in Egypt and become slaves there,
 - but would be delivered after 430 years and brought into the land of Canaan where they would serve God.
 2. You know how just lately a man named Moses (who claims to be a prophet) has returned to Egypt...
 - a. He got your hopes up by telling you that God was going to fulfil His promise to deliver you from bondage in Egypt...
 - b. But ever since he came, things have gone from bad to worse!
 - 1) It was enough that Pharaoh had commanded that all your sons should be thrown into the River...
 - Enough that you had to toil in the hot sun to erect dream buildings for Pharaoh...
 - 2) But now since Moses has come...
 - Pharaoh has been forcing you to do even more work!
 - Now you must make the same number bricks as before,
 - but you are responsible for getting the straw to produce the bricks.
 - It was bad before Moses came; now it is intolerable!
 3. But just lately, there has been a new development!
 - a. Moses has been pronouncing (and actually bringing) God's judgement on Pharaoh for his refusal to let you go...
 - First, he turned all the water in Egypt to blood...
 - Then he brought great numbers of frogs on the land...
 - Then lice, which was something the Egyptian magicians could not duplicate by their tricks...
 - Then God sent great swarms of flies upon Egypt, but did not allow them to go where your people were in the land of Goshen.
 - After this, He struck the Egyptian's livestock,
 - sent boils upon all the people,
 - sent a terrible hail storm that damaged many of their crops...
 - sent Locusts to destroy what the hail had left behind,

- and finally caused a darkness so deep that it could be felt to fall on the Egyptians.
 - It is obvious, even to the Egyptians, that this is the hand of God!
- b. Yet, after all this, Pharaoh is still refusing to let you and your people go...
- Now Moses has threatened Pharaoh with a tenth plague...
 - This time, he told Pharaoh that every first born male is going to die on a single night!
 - both the first born animals and the first born sons!
 - Not just the children, but all the firstborn at whatever age.
 - That means that the heads of household would die in almost every family since they were ordinarily the first born.
- B. It is at this very moment—with the threat of death hanging over Egypt—that God’s Word comes to you and your people from the prophet Moses!
1. Moses tells you how you can escape this terrible judgement of God when it comes!
- a. You are to take a lamb without blemish and offer it in place of your first born son!
- You are to offer this lamb as a sacrifice to God and take the blood of the sacrifice and apply it to the lintel and the doorposts of your house.
 - Then you are to gather your family together to eat this lamb and to prepare to leave Egypt.
- b. God’s promise to you is that when He sends out His angel to execute the first born in all the land of Egypt,
- He will instruct the angel to pass over all the houses that are marked out by the blood of the lamb.
 - The blood will tell the angel that the death-judgement has already been executed in that house!
 - God will accept the lambs in place of all the first born sons of your people!
- c. The only thing that will make you different from the Egyptians is the lamb.
- You and your sons deserve to die just as much as the Egyptians do...
 - But God has promised to accept the lamb in your place.
 - He said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

2. So there you are, gathered with your family, eating this lamb that saves you!
 - a. There you are at this meal, between two great events:
 - The sacrifice of the lamb...
 - and the judgement of God.
 - The lamb has been sacrificed and the judgement will fall later that night.
 - b. There you are, feeding on the lamb that has taken your place!
 - It has been sacrificed for you...
 - And you are trusting in God that judgement will not come to you!
 - How thankful you are to be associated with the lamb!

II. Christian, that is exactly where you are when you come to the Lord's Table!

- A. At the communion table, you are between two great events...
 1. You look back upon Jesus Christ who has been sacrificed for us...
 2. And you look forward to the Day of Judgement when God's Judgement will pass over you and fall on all those who have not betaken themselves to Christ.

TRANS> We live in a day of fulfilment...

- Let me tell you about each of these events...

- B. First, let me tell you about Christ who was sacrificed for us!
 1. He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins when He died on the cross.
 - a. The simple truth is that we all deserve to die because of our sin.
 - If it were not for the sacrifice of Christ, the same thing would happen to us that will happen to everyone else who is outside of Christ.
 - b. We are no different than any other human being...
 - We all participated in Adam's first sin...
 - We all share in the rebellion of the human race against God.
 - If you are honest, you know that that rebellion shows itself in your life.
 - I don't care how religious you are or how much people may admire you and think you are a good person...
 - God sees your heart, and He has declared that we are all under sin.

- He has declared that every one of us deserve to burn in Hell forever!
- It is not just physical death that we are faced with,
 - but suffering in Hell forever and ever!
- Although we may find it hard to accept, this is what we justly deserve because we have turned from our Creator!
 - Our rebellion against God **seems** far less offensive to us than it really is because this rebellion is something that everyone participates in.
 - But just because it is common does not make it more acceptable to God.
 - If you lived in a society of cannibals,
 - you would probably think cannibalism was okay too, but that doesn't make it so...
 - In our society,
 - you probably think more lightly of abortion and of sexual immorality than cannibalism because these things are so common among us...
 - but most cannibals would think abortion and adultery are much worse than eating your enemies!
- But even if you take pride that you do not approve of any of these sins...
 - you are still guilty of a far greater offense that is the root of every other sin...
 - You share the rebellion of the human race against God!
 - You do not worship Him as you ought,
 - nor do you obey Him as we ought.
 - For this, we **all** deserve to burn in Hell forever!
 - God has declared it!

TRANS> Christianity is the only religion that really takes sin seriously!

- It is the only religion that **can** take it seriously because it is the only religion that offers a real solution to human sin!
2. That solution is Jesus Christ!
- a. He is the Son of God who came to be our Passover!

- All the lambs that were offered in the Old Testament were only pictures of Jesus Christ!
 - It is obvious that a lamb could not really take the place of a human being!
 - The Passover in Egypt was only salvation from temporal death—
 - but it was given as picture of the salvation that God was going to provide from eternal death through His Son!
- b. Jesus is God's only begotten Son!
- 1) And He was offered to represent His whole church from the beginning of the world to the end!
 - He is the One who took our place!
 - All our iniquities were laid on Him!
 - 2) And because He was the Son of God, He was able to bear the pains of everlasting Hell for us on the cross!
 - He took the entire penalty!
 - It was so great a penalty that it made this One who was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah to sweat great drops of blood in His deep agony!
 - He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
 - None but the Son of God could bear such a great burden.
3. And brothers and sisters, His sacrifice was fully accepted by God for us!
- a. It was accepted for every one of you who have fled to Christ for mercy!
 - He paid the full price of your redemption!
 - There is no more sacrifice for sin!
 - God showed us that He accepted Christ's sacrifice by raising Him from the dead...
 - Now we can look back and see that Christ, our Passover, has been offered—
 - and that this offering has been accepted.
 - b. In the Lord's Supper, we do not offer Christ again...
 - 1) But instead we come to remember how He was sacrificed for us 2000 years ago...
 - We come as those who have obtained life through that one sacrifice that was offered for the sins of the world!

- 2) You need to recognise that there is a difference between a sacrifice and a sacrificial feast...
 - The sacrifice is when the blood is shed,
 - but the feast is when the worshippers eat that sacrifice and rejoice that they have communion in the sacrifice.
 - In the Old Testament, this was called a peace offering...
 - First it was sacrificed and a portion given to God...
 - Then it was eaten by the worshippers.
 - The Lord's Supper is not Christ being sacrificed again,
 - but Christ who was sacrificed being eaten at a sacrificial meal.
- c. This feast will continue until Jesus comes back again at the last day.
 - The feast began when He was offered for us two thousand years ago,
 - and it continues for the Church until the end of the world when we will again feast with Him face to face as the disciples did on the night He was betrayed.
 - We participate in the very same sacrifice as Peter and John, Paul and Justin Martyr and Augustine and Chrysostom and John Calvin and John Owen and every other Christian down through the ages.
 - All this is brought out when Jesus says,
 - Luke 22:16: "I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."
 - He has commanded us to keep eating it in the church,
 - but He will no longer eat it with us until everything is fulfilled.

TRANS> So you see that when you are at the Lord's Table, the Lord's sacrifice is what you look back on.

- This aspect of the Passover has already been fulfilled...
 - But now we need to look at that aspect of the Passover that is **yet** to be fulfilled,
 - that second event which is still awaiting fulfilment in the kingdom of God.
- C. And that is the actual passing over of those who have betaken themselves to Christ for refuge.
1. In one sense, we might be able to say that this has already been fulfilled too...
 - a. At the cross, Satan was judged.
 - Before Jesus came, he had held the nations in bondage to sin...

- But after Jesus came, the gospel began to spread into all the world.
 - Satan was bound so that he could not deceive the nations as he once had.
 - In this sense, the world has already been redeemed her enemy has already been judged...
 - We have been set free to serve God and are no longer under bondage to sin through Jesus.

- b. Yet, it is clear that Satan's final judgement does not come until the last day when he is cast into the Lake of Fire together with all those who are outside of Christ.
 - It is obvious that we still face physical death and that we still struggle with sin in our lives.
 - It is obvious that our enemies still try to keep us from serving Christ and that temptations war against us.
 - There is still much that must be fulfilled at the day of judgement...

- 2. In that day, God's judgement of eternal misery in Hell will fall on all who are not found in Jesus Christ.
 - a. Just as it was at the original Passover,
 - only those who are trusting in the sacrifice that God appointed will be saved.
 - The angels will take all the others and cast them into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

 - b. Unless you are found in Jesus Christ on that great day, you will be condemned on account of your sin.
 - Jesus sees to it that every one of His sheep find their way to Him and obtain life through His sacrifice...
 - but there are many in the Church who are not His true sheep.

 - c. It is very important that you understand something at this point!
 - Just because you go through the motions of eating the Lord's Supper does not mean that you are truly in Christ!

 - 1) You must believe God's promise concerning Jesus Christ if you would saved!
 - You must rely on nothing else but Christ, our Passover, for the forgiveness of sin.

 - 2) It was the same for Israel as it is for us...

- All those who came to the feast were brought out of Egypt and were able to have communion with the people of God...
 - They were part of the church in this way and shared in the blessing of deliverance from the land of Egypt...
 - But later on it was revealed that many of them did not have true faith.
 - As a result, they were cut off.
 - In Hebrews 3:16-19, it says:
 - Heb 3:16-19: For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.
- 3) You see, you are admitted to the Church when you profess faith and you become a part of the Church from that time...
- a) There is a sense in which you are delivered and are truly numbered with God's people...
 - But if you don't have saving faith, you are only there temporarily—
 - until God cuts you off...
 - And He will if there is unbelief in your heart—
 - if you are not relying on Christ alone for your salvation you will be cut off.
 - b) It is **not** your church connection that saves you...
 - Nor is it merely eating the Lord's Supper...
 - The thing that saves you is the thing that the Church and the Supper both point you to:
 - Jesus Christ who was crucified for sinners!
 - c) I can prove to you that not everyone who eats this supper will be saved in the end.
 - Jesus shows us this in Luke 22:21-22.
 - Judas was there and Judas ate of the Lord's Supper—
 - but Jesus says of him:
 - "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!"

- Judas was there eating and drinking,
 - but he was not there with faith!
 - I declare to you,
 - Now is the time to come to Christ!
 - Now is the time to feed upon Him and all His benefits!
 - The Church is at the Table until Jesus returns!
 - looking back at the sacrifice that God accepted for our sins...
 - and looking forward to the day of Judgement when God will pass over us and set us free from **all** our enemies, even death itself!
3. And let me say that if you are truly trusting in Christ, you will be different!
- a. You see, those who have true faith have true communion with Him—
 - They truly do feed upon Jesus Christ!
 - b. What I mean is, Jesus nourishes them with His flesh...
 - He actually feeds them so that spiritual life grows up in them.
 - If this new life is not there, it is because Christ is not there!
 - This spiritual life is not some kind of intangible weird thing...
 - It is a life that believes and obeys the word of God more and more as the years go by.
 - It is not about food or drink or ceremonies, but about keeping the commandments of God!
 - Jesus truly does feed His people with newness of life.
 - The Church is commanded to feed upon Him in this way until He returns at the end of the age.

III. So then, how ought you to come to the Lord's Table?

A. First of all, you ought to come with faith.

1. I know I have just said this, but I want to say it again because it is so important!
2. There are so many souls that will be condemned because they come to this table with faith in the act of coming to the table itself...
 - That kind of faith is a fatally misdirected faith!

- The faith that you must come with is the faith that looks to Jesus...
 - The Lord's Table is properly celebrated in remembrance of Him!
 - Jesus said, "do this in remembrance of me."
 - You do not come looking to the table or to what you do, but looking to Him as the Passover who was sacrificed for us.
 - It is Christ who saves, and the table that testifies of Him!
 - If you turn this around backwards,
 - you have the table which saves and Christ who testifies of the table!

TRANS> So then, you come rightly to this table only when you have faith in Christ...

B. Secondly, you must come to this table with repentance.

1. Repentance is a change of mind about your sin...
 - It is when you see your sin as something that you really do want to be rid of.
 - When you stop trying to justify yourself and when you start admitting that you truly do deserve God's judgement to fall upon you...
2. Repentance involves a turning from your own way to follow Christ and to learn to walk in His way.
 - A person is by no means perfect after he repents,
 - but he is going in a completely different direction...
 - He is following Christ and seeking to please Him and when he falls, he repents again and gets up to follow some more.
 - Judas did not repent in this way, he killed himself...
 - But Peter, who also denied Christ, wept bitterly and then came and followed Jesus again.
 - When you come to the Lord's Table, you are to put away all your bitterness and impurity and come seeking to serve Him.

TRANS> And this relates to the third thing you must come to the table with...

C. You must come with hunger and thirst!

1. At the Lord's Table, we feed upon the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.
 - As I said before, the whole age from the sacrifice of Christ until His return, is a time of feasting upon Christ.

- Now is the time for growing and bearing fruit in preparation for the final harvest when He returns to gather the fruit into His barn.
 - The question is, do you hunger for this bread?
2. At this table, He promises to feed us His flesh so as to give us new life.
- I want to say a whole lot more about this in the weeks to come...
 - But the general idea is that we look to Christ to truly be our nourishment.
 - He is the bread of life who came down from heaven to give life to the world.
 - He fills us with the fullness of new life, and we are to look to Him by faith to give us this life.

TRANS> So you see then that you ought to come to this table with faith, with repentance, and with hunger and thirst.

D. Next I would add that you ought to come to this table with reverence.

1. It is surely a sobering thing to be at this table...
 - looking back on our dear Lord Jesus Christ receiving our penalty; even bearing the eternal wrath of God...
 - and looking forward to that day when the same wrath will fall upon all who reject Him...
 - All the while knowing that that same wrath is the wrath that we justly deserve!
 - If you believe this, it will certainly make you reverent at this table!
2. But woe to you if you come with a mocking callous spirit to this sacred table!
 - You are like the thief on the cross who mocked Christ...
 - You deserve the rebuke that the penitent thief pronounced:
 - Luke 23:40-41: "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."
 - You must see that you deserve the condemnation that Christ took for you on the cross!
3. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for not discerning the Lord's body when they came to the table...
 - They were not caught up with what was really being remembered there!
 - They were treating their brothers and sisters for whom Christ died with contempt,

- and they were making the table a table of self-indulgence instead a table where Christ was remembered.

TRANS> You must come to this table with reverence and godly fear...

- But as I reminded you when we looked at Psalm 95,
 - Your reverence should also be mixed with joyfulness!
 - You must not allow reverence to trump joyfulness...
 - The two are to be found together!
 - You come rightly when you come with both reverence and joy!

E. So fifthly, you ought to come to this table with joyful gratitude.

1. When you look back and you see what Christ has done for you,
 - and when you look ahead to the judgement from which you have been delivered—
 - it ought to make you laugh with joy!
 - Psalm 126 expresses it well!
 - Psalm 126:1-3: When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, *And* we are glad.
2. Do you see how desperate you were?
 - Do you see how great a salvation has been prepared for you?
 - Do you see the love of God that is displayed here for you?
 - Look at a person who wins the lottery!
 - It is too good to be true!
 - It is like a dream!
 - All his problems are solved!
 - At least, that is what he thinks—and that is why he rejoices so!
 - But in Christ,
 - you have received **so** much more!
 - By His grace, you will see the glory of God instead of the misery of Hell!
3. If there is no joy in so great a deliverance,
 - it must be that you do not really understand what Christ has done.

TRANS> And now for the last thing you ought to bring to this table...

- This is a little different than the others:

- faith, repentance, hunger and thirst, reverence, and joyfulness...

F. You ought to come to this table with other people.

1. Now is the day of salvation!

- Now is the time when God has called all people everywhere to repent!

- It is the time for feasting upon Jesus and all His benefits!

- It is the time before the final judgement,

- and after Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us!

2. You are to encourage everyone to come and feed upon Christ!

- You are to point back to His sacrifice and point ahead to the day of judgement!

a. When Israel was in Egypt, they encouraged their Egyptian friends to look to the lamb that God had commanded...

- Some of the Egyptians joined them...

- There was a mixed multitude that went out of Egypt—people who had learned to trust in Israel's God.

b. How can you sit on this great truth about Christ our Passover and not invite others to come to the feast!

- What danger they are in!

- What joy they are missing!

- Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in...

- Compel them to come and feed upon Jesus Christ!

3. And above all, teach your children to feed upon Him—

a. All of your parenting can be summed up in teaching them to feast on Jesus...

- At birth, you are to bring them to Him to receive the sign and seal of the covenant...

- Andy and Danielle Kubik are bringing their little one for baptism today.

- From their birth, you are to look to Jesus to bless them and to nourish them with life.

b. You are commanded to bring them up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord.

- That means that you apply God's word to them at every stage of their development!
 - There is no stage at which the command to love God with all their heart does not apply—
 - It applies at the terrible twos when parents make all the excuses...
 - It applies at puberty when parents start to make even more excuses for their children!
 - There is to be self-control, kindness, love, faith, repentance, no grumbling or complaining—
 - everything at every age!
 - Oh parents,
 - teach your children to receive the fullness of Christ at every age!
 - This is the day for feeding on Him!
 - Keep feeding them with Christ—see that they abide in His word!
 - He has great riches to give them, even eternal life!
- c. And then, when they are old enough to take responsibility for themselves...
- You can bring them to this table to feed upon Christ!
- 1) But do you know, there is even a sense in which they feed with you at the when they are very small...
- In the same way that an infant receives nourishment from His mother before he is even born, and from her breasts after...
 - So when you feed upon Christ,
 - you feed not only for yourself,
 - but also in order that you might have grace to nourish your children also.
 - They are like branches that are connected to you as you feed upon Jesus Christ.
 - God has called you to nourish them.

Conclusion:

What a privilege it is to live between the sacrifice and the final judgement!

- Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us!
- God will pass over you when He brings His terrible wrath upon sinners at the last day if you will but look to Christ now!
 - Come and feast upon the Lamb!